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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2066  
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KYIV IMMEDIATE 0127  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 6004  
RUEHVJ/AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO IMMEDIATE 0143  
RUEHSQ/AMEMBASSY SKOPJE IMMEDIATE 3398  
RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI IMMEDIATE 5621  
RUEHTI/AMEMBASSY TIRANA IMMEDIATE 4528  
RUEHVB/AMEMBASSY ZAGREB IMMEDIATE 5510  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHNO/USDELMC BRUSSELS BE IMMEDIATE  
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SUBJECT: NATO, ALBANIA AND CROATIA SIGN ACCESSION PROTOCOLS

¶1. (U) In a brief ceremony on July 9, Albania, Croatia, and the NATO Allies signed the Protocols of Accession for the two countries to become part of NATO (Note: The original Protocols will be hand carried to the Department. End note). SYG Jaap de Hoop Scheffer described the day as a historic one for the entire Euro-Atlantic community, praised both countries for their hard work in reforms, and commended them to vigorously continue these efforts during the ratification process and beyond. The SYG also reiterated that NATO's door will remain open and hoped that this round of enlargement should be seen as encouragement for all those countries that wish to foster a closer link with NATO.

¶2. (U) The Danish PermRep, speaking as Dean on behalf of all Allies, welcomed Albania and Croatia to the "NATO family," encouraged them to continue reforms, and called on them to assume their new roles in a NATO that safeguards peace through mutual defense. He also reiterated that there is "more room at the NAC table" and that "the door is open" to future NATO members.

¶3. (U) Albanian FM Lulzim Basha spoke of his profound sense of honor and privilege in addressing the Allies on such a historic day. He said Albania's journey from a history of isolation had taken hard work, perseverance, unwavering commitment, and help from good friends. He expressed gratitude to all those that helped his country reach this goal. He pledged that Albania would fulfill all the obligations and responsibilities of membership.

¶4. (U) Croatian FM Gordan Jandrokovic began his remarks with gratitude for the support his country received in preparing for accession. He hoped the ratification process in Allied capitals would proceed swiftly enough to allow for Croatia to attend the Strasbourg-Kehl summit in April 2009. Jandrokovic said Croatia's reforms had been an investment in its future and pledged Croatia would share its experience with any of the countries in the region that hope to someday walk the same path. He also pledged Croatian support for operations as a sign of its continued commitment to meeting its membership obligations.

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